



Using the Child Care and Development Fund to Support a System of Quality Improvement for School-Age Programs State Self-Assessment Tool

Drawn from early childhood systems work, the following elements comprise a useful framework for identifying the strengths, opportunities, and gaps in a coordinated system of quality improvement for programs serving school-age children. In preparation for tomorrow's discussion, please rank your progress on each of these elements, according to a five-point scale that assesses whether state leaders:

- 1 = Have not started this task
- 2 = Have started initial concept and planning work
- 3 = Have begun to implement this task
- 4 = Have made solid progress in implementing this task
- 5 = Have made sufficient progress in completing this task

ELEMENT ONE: GOVERNANCE

A coordinating body, that is broadly representative of key stakeholders, and serves to establish a common vision and goals; and functions as the nexus of partnerships and collaborative efforts to build a coordinated system.

	1	2	3	4	5	Comments
A. State leaders across key agencies have developed a shared vision for promoting quality in school-age programs.						
B. State early care and education planning groups incorporate perspectives from leaders in the school-age field.						
C. The state has a formal statewide afterschool network or coalition that includes membership from various agencies that fund afterschool programs.						

ELEMENT TWO: REGULATIONS

Regulations ensure the health and safety of children in care; and provide a baseline standard for quality in all regulated programs.

	1	2	3	4	5	Comments
A. The state's child care regulations include separate or embedded requirements for school-age programs. These regulations take into account ways in which school-age programming differs from early care and education.						
B. State leaders engage school-age programs that are exempt from licensing regulations in trainings and other efforts to improve program quality.						



ELEMENT THREE: PROGRAM/PRACTITIONER STANDARDS

Standards above those set by licensing regulations that spell out the elements of a high quality program, including staff qualifications and core competencies, appropriate curricula, outreach to parents and other key topics. Practitioner standards define the core competencies and benchmarks of high quality practice. Credentials offer practitioners a career pathway by identifying the training and experience requirements that support quality practice.

	1	2	3	4	5	Comments
A. The state has a <u>quality rating and improvement system</u> that includes standards for school-age programs.						
B. State leaders have developed <u>voluntary quality standards or guidelines</u> that guide quality improvement efforts for a range of school-age programs.						
C. State leaders have developed a set of <u>core competencies</u> describing the skills of qualified school-age program professionals.						
D. The state has a <u>school-age professional credential</u> recognizing professionals who have met a set of training or professional experience requirements.						

ELEMENT FOUR: PROGRAM/PRACTITIONER SUPPORTS

Strategies to reach out to practitioners and programs to ensure equitable access to supports; and a cohesive set of professional development and training opportunities to help practitioners to increase their professional skills.

	1	2	3	4	5	Comments
A. The state offers technical assistance and/or incentives to school-age programs to help them meet higher levels of quality.						
B. The state offers training opportunities, incentives and/or scholarships to support school-age program practitioners in building their professional skills.						

ELEMENT FIVE: FINANCING

Financing to support the system, including the costs of developing quality standards, providing supports and incentives, and other costs associated with ensuring practitioners have access to quality improvement activities.

	1	2	3	4	5	Comments
A. State leaders blend and braid CCDF quality funds with other funding sources to support a coordinated system of quality improvement for a range of school-age programs in the state.						
B. State leaders have a plan to sustain funding for a system of quality improvement for school-age programs.						

ELEMENT SIX: ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

Accountability systems to collect and use data to track trends over time, and to monitor and continually improve system elements, and to conduct evaluations of initiatives and/or the system.

	1	2	3	4	5	Comments
A. State leaders utilize the School-Age Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (SACERS) or a similar assessment tool to measure how programs improve in quality over time.						
B. State leaders assess the impact of state quality improvement strategies on SACERS scores or other measures of program quality.						
C. State leaders have commissioned an independent evaluation on the effectiveness of existing quality improvement strategies for school-age programs.						

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